



# MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Robert M. Summers, Ph.D.  
Deputy Secretary

March 10, 2010

The Honorable Maggie L. McIntosh, Chair  
Members of the Environmental Matters Committee  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: House Bill 903: Environment – Road Salt Management Program

Dear Delegate McIntosh and Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide some information regarding HB 903 Environment – Road Salt Management Program. This Bill proposes to require the State Highway Administration (SHA) and each local jurisdiction that is responsible for highway maintenance to establish and implement a best practices road salt management program by October 31, 2011. The Department of the Environment is responsible for review and comment of these programs. Although MDE shares the concerns of the adverse effects that road salt can have on the environment, and understands the need for public safety during winter weather of our roadway systems, the Department lacks the necessary resources to assess and evaluate road salt management programs from SHA and each local jurisdiction.

Salt can have serious effects on the environment, such as more erosion and sediment transport to the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays due to excess salt saturation and destroying the natural soil structure; high concentrations of salt can damage and kill vegetation; salt poses the greatest danger to fresh water ecosystems and fish; excess salt seeping into groundwater and runoff into reservoirs affecting the taste of drinking water as well as causing potential health hazards (e.g., exacerbate hypertension); and corrosion damage to exposed rebar, bridges, and automobiles.

The Department is willing to work with SHA, local jurisdictions, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss this issue and how it can be addressed with existing resources.

Thank you allowing us to provide information on House Bill 903. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please do not hesitate to contact me at 410-260-6301 or [lnissley@mde.state.md.us](mailto:lnissley@mde.state.md.us).

Sincerely,

Lisa Nissley

cc: The Honorable Benjamin F. Kramer  
Jay Sakai, Director, Water Management Administration

